

VOL. X., NO. 191.

NEWPORT NEWS VA., SUNDAY, AUGUST 13, 1905.

PRICE TWO CENTS

MEN IN PENITENTIARY ARE FOND OF ANIMALS

Convicts Noted for Cruelty and Brutality During Freedom Show Devotion to Dumb Brutes During Confinement—McSweeney and His Rats

Whether because they feel that the hand of all mankind is raised against them, and that they are forced to turn to dumb animals for love and companionship, or whether it is to divert their minds during the long, dreary hours behind prison walls, it is a noteworthy fact that many of the convicts in the penitentiary service marked fondness for animal pets and show remarkable tact and patience in their care and training.

Many of these prisoners, who, during their confinement have by their loving care and tender patience won the devotion and fidelity of their dumb friends were noted during their freedom for cruelty and brutality. Some of these convicts, who are so strangely attached to their pets that they would risk their lives in protecting them from harm and would share their last crust of bread with them, are serving life sentences for murder.

As the number and species of animals permitted to live inside the prison walls are, for the most part, very limited, the prisoners who are desirous of cultivating pets must put up with such animals as chance throws in their way. This often leads to peculiar selections, but none are more strange than the choice of pets made by two convicts at present inmates of the Ohio penitentiary.

One of these prisoners is Morgan McSweeney, about 60-years-old, who is serving a life sentence for murder committed in Washington county. He was received at the prison in 1898 and being an engineer, he was put to work running a steam pump that supplies water to the prison kitchen and laundry. This pump is situated in a dark, dismal corner of the kitchen basement and is entirely shut off from where any of the other prisoners are employed.

This basement, like many other parts of the penitentiary plant, is infested with rats, hundreds making their home in the holes and crevices of the crumbling walls and beneath the broken flooring of the old building.

While McSweeney says he never was afraid of rats, he did not take kindly to them at first. Neither did the rats at first look with favor upon the invasion of their own domain by a stranger and they would scurry across the floor and into their holes every time McSweeney appeared.

Gradually the rats grew accustomed to McSweeney's presence, and McSweeney grew accustomed to the rats. Because of his lonely existence he began to take an interest in watching them as they would poke their heads out of their holes and stare at him, ready to dart back again at his slightest movement.

The more the old man watched the rodents the more interested he became in them and their habits. They were his only living companions, and as he felt kindly toward them he took the quickest and easiest way to win their trust and friendship by feeding them. He began by placing bits of bread, meat and other morsels of food near their holes, which the rats would stealthily crawl to and seize and then dart back to their nests.

Gradually McSweeney placed the food farther and farther away from the rodents' holes and closer to the chair in which he sat, until by months of patient perseverance, never offering to harm or scare them, he won the confidence of the rats to such an extent that they would come right up to his chair and eat the food out of his hands.

But McSweeney was not content with this. During the long, dreary months he also grew to feel a real affection for his only companions and he determined to win their complete trust and friendship. By constant care never to harm or alarm them, and beginning by placing food in his lap, on his shoulders and even on the top of his head, he at length tamed the rats so they would crawl up his legs to any part of his body where he had placed food and sit there to eat it.

At first only a few of the bravest of the countless number of rats that swarmed about the place would venture to climb upon him, but after a while, seeing that those of their number who did venture near the engineer were treated only with kindness and plenty to eat, the others gained courage and it was not long before the entire host of rodents would vie with each other in swarming over McSweeney's body to get the morsels of food placed there.

The engineer soon had the rats so well trained that whenever he wished to feed them all he had to do was to give a low, peculiar whistle and dozens of them, some almost as big as cats, would dart from their holes. Without waiting an instant they would swarm all over McSweeney, running up his legs, under his coat, on his head and shoulders, and in fact everywhere

they could gain a footing.

On one of these occasions the rodents, not finding enough food on McSweeney's person to satisfy their appetites, devoured the entire back of his coat collar and the back of his coat before he knew what they were doing.

After a while the rats became so fond of their benefactor that there was scarcely an hour in the day that there were not at least a dozen of his strange pets crawling around on McSweeney's lap or perched somewhere on his body. All he had to do was to give vent to a peculiar whistle and the whole army of them would rush from their hiding places and literally cover him by swarming over his body.

McSweeney kept on feeding and playing with his pets in this manner for over four years, and only closed his intimate relations with the rodents when the prison authorities, a few months ago, changed his employment from running the pump to working around the corridors in the east wing of the prison.

Although his present employment is much more congenial and he has the society of several other convicts, McSweeney says he hates to leave the pump solely because it hurts him to part company with his pet rats.

"Many a time," said McSweeney, "I have had the rats so thick about me that when I got up from my chair to walk away I would be obliged to shove them out of the way with my foot in order to find space to walk without stepping on them. I would always have to eat my meals standing up with my plate in my hand, for if I put the plate down anywhere the rats would take it away from me before I could eat it."

The other prisoner who has made strange pets is Pat Moran, sentenced to life imprisonment for a double murder in Cleveland in 1894. For several years Moran has been employed as a clerk in the Deputy Warden's office. He is allowed many special privileges, which include permission to go anywhere he likes within the prison grounds.

A few years ago, while on their way to the prison one morning, a couple of guards came across an alligator, about four feet long, lying in the street. It was afterward learned that the "gator" had escaped from its owner, a nearby saloon keeper, during the night.

The guards, not knowing at the time where it belonged, procured a barrel into which they put the "gator" and took him to the prison, where they dumped him in the basin of the large fountain in the inner yard. The alligator seemed to be so greatly pleased with his new quarters that when his owner shortly afterward learned where his lost pet was, he decided to let him stay there.

Moran used to sit near the edge of the fountain and watch the alligator with interest. He began to feed it and soon had the ugly brute so tame that it would swim up to where he stood and would take food out of his hand. The beast also grew so tame that it would clamber out of the water, and in response to Moran's call it would follow him all over the lawn.

A couple of years ago a resident of Columbus had three alligators sent to him from the South. The largest was about five and one-half feet long and the smallest four feet in length. When they arrived they appeared to be so wild and vicious that the man to whom they were shipped was afraid to unpack them from their crate.

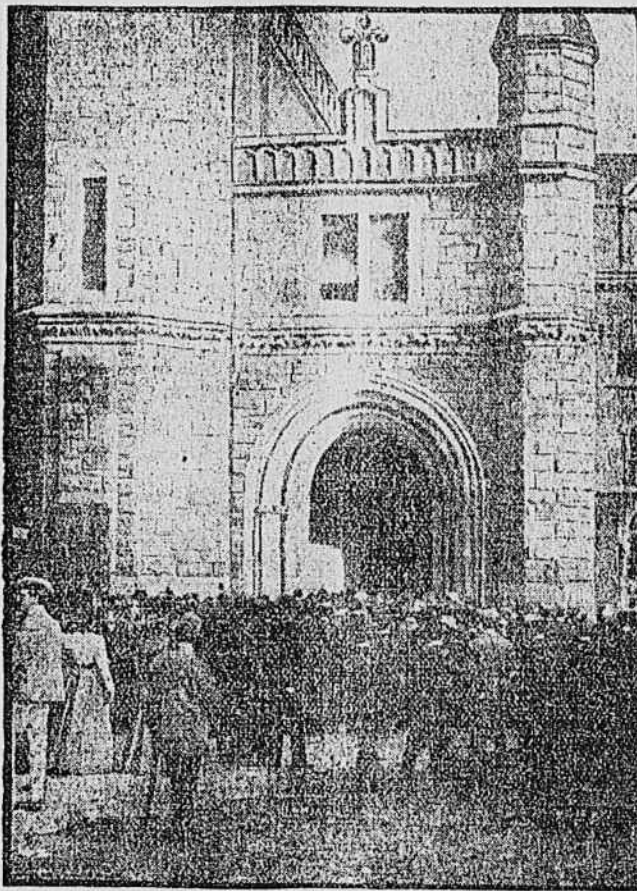
He had previously heard of how Moran had tamed the alligator at the penitentiary, and he asked him by phone if he would accept his alligators as a gift and care for them. Moran gladly accepted the offer, and the three alligators were carted to the prison and dumped into the fountain basin. They were wild at first, but by pursuing the same tactics with them that he did with the first "gator" and feeding them every day he finally got them as tame as the other one.

Moran often astonishes visitors to the prison in summer by calling one of the big, ugly brutes, and when it crawls over the grass to where he is sitting he will take it up in his lap and stroke its back and head, fondling it as one would a pet dog. In winter the alligators are kept in a large tank filled with water, in the basement of the chapel. Pat feeds them every day and has sole charge of them.

Moran is also a great lover of dogs and birds, and has raised several pets of both species during his confinement. He has two fine bull terriers, which he breeds and gives the puppies away to his friends.

A short time ago he had a flock of fine homing pigeons, of which he was justly proud. A year ago he sent two of the pigeons to Louisville, Ky., by a

(Continued on sixth page.)



COMMENCEMENT WEEK VISITORS ENTERING BATTELLE CHAPEL, YALE.

Commencement week at Yale is always a busy season in New Haven, for the crowds begin to gather long in advance of the closing day. This year the number of visitors promises to be larger than ever. Friends and relatives of the graduates are filling the hotels, while hundreds of sons of Old Eli are returning for the annual reunions.

GIANT SKELETONS IN THE GRAVEL PIT

Dry Bones of Man of Abnormal Size Unearthed by Workman Near Dayton.

HAD GREAT LENGTH OF ARMS

Had Probably Been in Earth for Centuries as Bones Crumbled When Air Struck Them—Skull Long and Narrow, Indicating Cranial Deformity—Not Mound Builder.

DAYTON, OHIO, Aug. 12.—The gravel pits in the vicinity of Dayton have revealed some startling finds recently several giant skeletons having been unearthed, but possibly the most interesting was that discovered in the pit at Edgar's woods. The bones were those of a man of abnormal growth, the skeleton being remarkable for the great length of the arms, the left, having been used as a pillow for the dead head when the body was buried. The skeleton had probably been in the ground for centuries, as the bones crumbled when exposed to the air, only the jaw remaining intact. On the left side of the jawbone protruded a large tusk, at least an inch in length, but the remainder of the teeth were normal and almost in a state of perfect preservation.

Attorney T. B. Herman, Republican candidate for city solicitor, was present when the find was made. He was with Moorhead when the latter opened the mounds in Ohio, and claims that the skeleton in Edgar's pit in no way compares with those of the mound builders. The skeleton is believed to be that of an Indian or other aborigine further removed in the scale of mankind. The body was buried in a peculiar position, the knees having been bent up against the chest. The skull was long and narrow and indicated a decided cranial deformity.

The Donkey Delighted.

The Democracy seems to be delighted with its new municipal ownership issue. The donkey can usually be counted on to fall upon the neck of any issue, radical or sham conservative, practical or utterly impractical, that seems to offer a prospect of a few extra votes at the next election.—Cincinnati Times-Star.

Both Sides of a Question.

"There are many things you can't do with money," said the man who affects philosophy. "Yes," answered Dustin Stax. "But there are a whole lot more things you can't do without it."—Washington Star.

His case is a very interesting one to medical science.—Lescuyer (Minn.) Cor. Chicago Chronicle.

NURSE IS IN JAIL BECAUSE OF LOVE

Broke Into Wealthy Farmer's House to See Object of Adoration.

AFTER WALKING TEN MILES

irate Father, However, Did Not Appreciate Such Devotion and Had Him Placed in Jail for Housebreaking—Girl Unsuspecting Object of His Peculiar Passion.

FRANKFORT, IND., Aug. 12.—Ralph Montgomery, a young man who says he is a trained nurse, of Shelbyville, Ill., is in jail here because of his love for Miss Coyner, daughter of John Coyner, a wealthy farmer, near Colfax. Early one day recently Coyner brought Montgomery to the county jail in an automobile, saying that he wanted him charged with housebreaking. Coyner then left without giving the officers additional information.

After he was placed in jail Montgomery said he had been employed by Coyner to nurse his mother-in-law, which he did for 14 weeks. While thus employed, he says, he became smitten by the charms of Coyner's daughter, but tried to conceal his feeling from her. A week ago he left the Coyner home, and came to this city. Last night his desire to see Miss Coyner became uncontrollable, and he walked to her home, 10 miles, and crept into the house. He was heard by Coyner, who found him under a bed.

Montgomery had a huge revolver in his hand when captured by Coyner, but did not attempt to use it. He says that he knows he is technically guilty of housebreaking, but that he could resist the temptation to be under the same roof with the girl, who did not even suspect that he loved her.

Love.

"Yes," said the Chicago girl, "I'm engaged to Mr. Rocks. It was really hard to decide, because I like Mr. Bullion quite as well and they're equally wealthy."

"What decided the thing?" asked her friend.

"Well, Mr. Rocks promised me the most alimony, if such a thing can become necessary."—Philadelphia Press.

A Way Out.

Upson—"Carnegie is a conundrum isn't he?"
Downs—"Why so?"
Upson—"He can't get rid of his money fast enough to suit himself, and yet he says he doesn't want any worthless dukes in his family."—Detroit Free Press.

OLD MOTHER NATURE IS A GOOD HOUSEKEEPER

"Old Faithful" Geyser a Self-Acting, Natural Power Washing Machine—Used First by General Sheridan's Troopers—Lace Making in Early Times

The "Old Faithful" geyser, which stands in the United States National Park, in the Yellowstone, is Nature's self-acting, natural power, washing machine.

General Sheridan's troops were the first to utilize the geyser as a laundry maid. "Old Faithful" erupts every 80 minutes with the regularity of clock-work, and all the soldiers had to do was to strip, throw in their soiled linen—Woolen goods are torn to pieces by the geyser—light their pipes, and wait.

No sooner had the geyser begun to work, than the clothes were tossed about as if a score of expert washerwomen were battling with them.

Finally they were thrown high into the air, and the soldiers caught them as they descended. The clothes, principally shirts and vests, were as white as snow, and rinsed almost dry.

A traveler who visited the Yellowstone some time ago, threw in his shirt immediately after "Old Faithful" had erupted, and it disappeared down the geyser's gullet into the bowels of the earth.

Nature made lace ages before man dreamt of doing so. In the West Indies there is a tree, the inner bark of which resembles lace to an extraordinary degree.

The bark consists of layers which can be pulled out into a fine white web of a beautiful design over four feet wide. The native women have for years past used this wild lace for making of dresses, which they generally wear only on festive days.

Occasionally this natural lace finds its way in small quantities into this country, where it is considered more of a novelty than anything else. A well known society lady, however, had a ball dress made of it a year or two ago.

If you were to visit one or two of the native huts in Bombay you would find that the floors were covered with what to all appearance was hand or machine made felt.

As a matter of fact the floor covering is only bark stripped from the sack tree, which grows in the district. The bark is a splendid substitute for felt, and besides being warm, is damp-proof.

Strong cloth, suitable for garments, can be manufactured from the heavy fibers of the Mexican maguey tree, while from its juices is distilled a beverage which is drunk by the well-to-do people of the country.

The caranhaba palm, which grows in Brazil, resists intense and protracted droughts, and is always green and vigorous. From the stalks of the plant wines and vinegars are made, as well as a starch resembling sago.

Its fruit is given to cattle for food, the pulp is used as a substitute for coffee the pith is an excellent cork, while the wood of the stem is turned into violin bodies.

In times of famine the nutritious substances obtained from the caranhaba palm are given to the poor. Brazilian doctors turn the roots of this strange plant into a blood-purifying mixture.

If you want one or two natural bombshells you will have to go to New Guinea, and pick them off the trees that grow there.

The cannon-ball tree, as it is called in the country, grows to the height of 60 feet, and its fruit resembles in shape and color the shells Britain and other great powers fire from their big guns.

When the fruit is ripe it bursts with a loud report, which can be heard a great distance away.

From the contents of the fruit the natives obtain several kinds of acids, sugar and gum, while they make domestic utensils from the empty shells.

In the country back of Uganda an African explorer came across half a dozen elephants drinking at a vast spring of natural seltzer water.

There are several of these springs in the world and between them they send up every day millions of gallons of seltzer, soda, lithia and other mineral waters.

Not long since Lord Roseberry received from America a gallon bottle of natural ink. This fluid was taken from a peculiar spring which flows at the base of Kencaw Mountain, near Marietta, in the State of Georgia.

Lord Roseberry found that the natural ink was a little heavier than the manufactured article, but it left a permanent stain, which made it a valuable agent where documents were to be preserved.

They don't have to dig underground for salt in Western Australia, for tons of it if required, can be got from Lake Lefroy in that country.

This lake is one mass of salt in dry weather, and the people living on the shores sail boats upon it which are fitted with four wheels.

The speed attained by these wheeled

yachts is much greater than the ordinary types used upon water, and as the surrounding country is too rough to allow of vehicular traffic, the boats save expense, labor and time.

The kernels of the nut of the candle tree are used by the islanders of the South Pacific, including Samoa, for keeping time.

The kernels are washed and strung on the rib of a palm leaf and the upper kernel lighted. The kernels, all being of the same size and substance, burn a certain number of minutes. As one burns out it sets fire to the one below.

The natives generally tie bits of bark along the strings at regular intervals, so as to mark the division of time.

An old-fashioned plate of china, known to collectors as "growing crockery," was sold by auction some time ago for \$250. From the plate itself had sprung a kind of eruption of beautiful crystals that took the form of miniature trees and pagodas.

The growing crystals had reached to a height of nearly an inch and were still rising higher and higher, bringing up with them the enamel surface of the plate.

There are a number of plates that grow in the world and they were made together many years back of clay, containing alumina and magnesia, and in certain cases they have been so acted upon by the presence of sulphuric acid as to produce fibrous crystals.

A soap that came from the same factory as the plates became covered with crystals, very much of the character of Epsom salts, and was sold for no less than a thousand guineas.

The clay from which these plates were made was dug from the earth before man discovered that Nature kept a general store, and that mixed with the material was alumina and magnesia.

Man has now been forced to take Nature as a mistress and to copy those products which she has already turned out.

Man makes borax and soda, but both of them can be found ready made by Nature and stored in vast reservoirs of her own digging.—Pearson's Weekly.

FILLED WITH COIN.

Was the Straw Sack on Which the Miser Slept for Years.

CONSTANTINOPLE, Aug. 12.—Christodoulos, the world famous antiquarian, is dead. He left all his available goods and chattels, money in bank, etc., to the Sultan "for the building of a new navy."

His only relative, a nephew, was to receive nothing but the sack of straw on which the old man and his relative slept for years. The nephew was disgusted.

"That straw-sack is the hardest couch even invented, full of lumps that hurt my back."

Mad as the nephew was, he decided to make a bonfire of the straw sack, but as he put his hand into the slit he touched some hard object.

"At last I got you," he cried. "Now into the gutter with you; you have given me pain long enough," and he was about to throw the supposed stone into the street when he found it to be a money bag. There were 120 gold liras in it. Investigation proved that the sack of straw contained 20 gold-filled bags, making the nephew a very rich man—in Turkey at least.

A Valuable Discovery.

A discovery made a year ago this spring by Frank Everett, of Cleveland, in this country, which will be of great interest and value to all lovers of house plants, is that by watering the plants with the sap of trees, gathered in the spring, they can be made to grow in the house during the winter with all the vigor attained by outdoor plants in the warm months.

The sap of elm and cottonwood trees is best, for it does not have to be thinned with water to keep it from fermenting, as is the case with the sap from maple and box elder trees. Mr. Everett gathers the sap in barrels and keeps it on hand. He finds that the growth produced in the plants by the use of this sap is wonderful. Last winter he grew a fine hill of sweet corn in a common pail in his parlor, to show what he could do and picked off from the hill on January 1, eight fine large roasting ears, which he had at New-Year's dinner.

He is confident that a large business could be done in gathering the sap for city hothouses.—Le Sueur (Minn.) Cor. Chicago Chronicle.

A Harsh Philosophy.

This life is off a game of nerve, which fools are wrong to play with. 'Tis not so much what you deserve, as what you get away with.—Washington Star.